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A look into a German classroom

Visitor finds the joys, problems, challenges for teachers are international

By Loraine McClellah
staff writer

A chance meeting between an American and German school teacher in an English pub has evolved into a video tape that will be available for all Farmington elementary teachers, and for the teachers to share with their students, depicting education in a German classroom.

"There are a lot of differences and more similarities than I imagined," said Barbara Novatis who teaches third graders at Forest Elementary. "The joys, the challenges, the problems that all teachers feel is international."

Guests of the Bernd Jost family in the small town of Salzgitter, Novatis and her husband spent a week in a German school learning about the country's educational philosophy, sitting in on classes, touring the school, sitting in on staff meetings and talking with teachers.

The talking with teachers was no idle chit-chat.

"We were immersed with talk on the two educational systems, both formally and informally, with talks that went on

long into the night. But we weren't comparing systems, that isn't fair because educational systems reflect the culture of the country," Novatis said. "What I hope to accomplish with my tape is a good overall observation of what we saw and learned."

JOST was chaperoning a group of German students on a tour through Great Britain when he approached Novatis and her husband on vacation there seven years ago, with a mention of their midwestern accent.

"That was unusual enough, pinpointing our dialect, while he was speaking English with a heavy British accent. We asked him to join us, found out he taught English to German students, and we talked for five hours."

The ensuing years brought a frequent correspondence between the two teachers, and then several summers ago, a visit by Jost to the U.S.

"The time he allotted to spend in Detroit was during the Easter break so he never got to see our classrooms in operation. But I did get him into our school and I was amazed at all he wanted to see: lesson plans, visual aids,

even the stock rooms, all the things I must have written about," Novatis said.

When the Novatises planned their trip to Germany this summer, they planned a stop-off in Salzgitter to see the Josts "just to say hello," she said.

"But he had the whole week planned for us: visits with his family, friends, to his church and of course the school. His wife Inge is a teacher, too. My husband is not. But the hospitality, the warmth, the good feelings and deep interests in their backgrounds and cultures drew us all together."

"I EXPECTED more regimentation in the classrooms, a formal atmosphere of the stereotype rigidity of the Germans, maybe even uniforms. But their classroom management was much the same as ours," Novatis said.

"There are no substitute teachers in the German system. If the teacher isn't there, the students are either filtered into another class or told to go home. Can you imagine us just telling the class to go home?"

"Putting students into another class is easy because all teachers on the

same level are all doing exactly the same thing at exactly the same time. There is no room for diverging from the subject, and the lesson plan is a permanent log. Even our visit was planned. We were part of the curriculum for that day, and the students were ready with questions about Michigan and Detroit."

"Students and teachers alike ride their bikes to school every day, and many times together, which I think is a neat relationship," she said, giving another example of the kinds of things she's captured on tape for teachers and students here to see.

But beyond the entertainment-educational value of the tape, she hopes to give other teachers the opportunity to reflect on what they believe is right for the American system of education.

"Every evening we analyzed what we had seen during the day, salaries, administration, classroom management problems, and it almost forced me, in a positive way, to be more aware of my own thoughts, and reinforced my own thoughts of what I am doing."



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—Barbara Novatis
Teacher at Forest
Elementary School

Community band revs up for concert season

Farmington Community Band begins its new season with rehearsal at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 11 in Harrison High School's Music Suite. Participation in the band is open to all high school students and all adults who would like to get back to playing an instrument again. The two-hour Tuesday night rehearsals continue through the 1984-85 season.

Musicians 12th graders must audition

and can call conductor Paul Barber, 661-6004, or Mary Orwig at 477-3598 for appointment. The two will also take any other calls of inquiry.

A something new for the band this season is its just-released stereo record, "Marching Along With FBC," a collection of 11 of the best compositions from the band's "Marching Into Spring" concert given last March.

The group played extremely well at

the March concert," Barber said, "and the audience's reaction was so enthusiastic that we felt this record would be a good way to remember that show, as well as preserve a memorable performance."

"The Farmington area is very rich in musical talent, and we're glad to be able to highlight that talent through the band, as well as the record."

In spite of the band's name, while

most of the musicians are from Farmington or Farmington Hills, there are a number of players that come from surrounding communities. Barber said the roster this year includes some from as far away as Rochester, Mt. Clemens and Southington.

THE BAND'S concert season begins with "Ticks and Toots" described on the playbill as "an evening of chilling, thrilling and spooky sounds," with an 8 p.m. curtain Tuesday, Oct. 30 in Harrison High School's auditorium. Barber encourages the audience to wear their Halloween finery and he will furnish the special effects and some special surprises.

Eight more scheduled performances throughout the season include three more concerts in Harrison, three in local malls and two in downtown Farmington.

"Viva La Dance" opens the Holiday season Dec. 2 when the guest performing group is the Michigan Ballet Theatre.

atre. Evelyn Kreason is artistic director of the theater, whose first "School of the Dance" was located in Farmington Hills.

Friday, Feb. 8 is the date that will mark the fourth annual Valentine's Dinner Dance for the band. Given each year in Glen Oaks Country Club, the

evening includes a buffet dinner, and dancing to the Big Band sounds provided by the Farmington Community Dance Band. Orwig is ticket chair for the event this year and has a maximum of 250 that will go on a first-come, first-served basis for the event that has always been sold out a month ahead of time.

Cornerstone of freedoms

The U.S. Constitution, the cornerstone of freedoms in this country, was written to protect every American

from the abuse of power by political parties as much as from abuses by kings.

Bible school set to open

Vacation Bible School for all children at least 4 years old runs 7-8:30 p.m. each evening Monday-Friday, Aug. 27-31 in Farmington Hills Corps, Salvation Army. The corps is located on the corner of Inkster and Shiloh-see roads.

The Bible school staff has planned crafts, films, songs, a Gospel Magic show and Bible stories for the week.

There is no charge. Registration is not necessary. Inquiries will be taken by calling the corps, 477-1153.



RANDY DORST/staff photographer

Rosa Gruetz is surrounded by well-wishers on her 100th birthday. Rosa Morgan, at left, is activities director for Farmington Nursing Home. Lilli-

an Strutz, Evelyn Strutz, William Horn and Dorothy Horn are nieces and nephews of the guest of honor.

Rosa Gruetz celebrates 100th birthday

Rosa Gruetz was the guest of honor among guests of honor when the staff at Farmington Nursing Home staged a party for residents born in August, in celebration of her 100th birthday.

Born Aug. 28, 1884 in Oppeln, Germany, she came to Pigeon, Mich., with her mother when she was 1 year old.

She moved to Detroit and lived with

her aunt as a young woman and took a job doing housework with a family that ultimately asked her to move with them to New York. She died, but the stay was cut short when she accepted a proposal of marriage from Edward Gruetz, and went back to Detroit to be married.

The couple were together for 37

years before his death. He was employed as a yard master for Michigan Central Railroad. Their time was spent between their home in the southwest section of Detroit and a cottage they owned near Algonac where she still remembers the delight of frying fresh-caught perch.

"Rosa had no children of her own, but she gave her love to nieces, nephews, neighbors and friends, and she loved to feed the birds," said her niece Evelyn Strutz. "When her niece became ill and needed nursing care, Rosa provided. After her husband's death, a half-brother and World War I veteran, needed her help and she was there bringing him goodies and encouragement."

Strutz added that when her aunt was in bed she expressed the desire to live until she was 100. "God," she said, "What can be said for that the good Lord granted her wish," she said.

Rosa Gruetz' birthday falls within the same week of the Farmington Nursing Home's annual picnic. It is the day of the annual picnic, and all of the residents are invited to attend. The picnic is held on the grounds, and the residents are invited to bring a picnic basket for all residents to enjoy.

rides will be co-going, with one \$5 ticket paying for a full day of rides.

The festival offers an arts and crafts show, many other displays, and a large selection of food. Entertainment will include many music and dance groups, a mime troupe, a dunk tank, fire department water fights, an apple pie eating contest and a rotten sucker contest.

There will be a \$1 charge for parking by the festival.

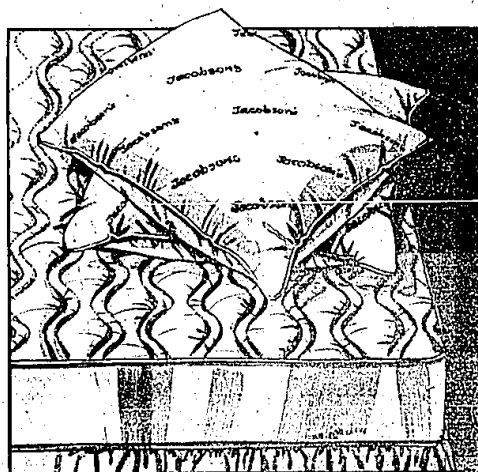
Festival set Sept. 7-9

The fourth annual West Bloomfield Fall Festival is set for Friday through Sunday, Sept. 7-9 on the Henry Ford Hospital site, Maple Road, near the intersection of the 16-mile road. The festival will feature a fireworks display and dancing to the music of the 18-piece Sun Messengers band both Friday and Saturday nights. Balloon races will be part of the festivities again this year, and a Las Vegas-style casino for adults only, a new addition to the program. Carnival

Co-op Nursery opens Sept. 10

Mayfair Cooperative Nursery School opens its doors for classes Monday, Sept. 10. Openings are still available for the afternoon preschool and kinder-

garten enrichment programs. Interest of parents should call Susan Tapp at 477-5004.



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